

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

Cancel Claims 1-27.

28. (new) A method of providing electronic mail messages to a subscriber in a telecommunication network, the method comprising the steps of:

storing in a network database the subscriber's electronic mail handling instructions;

receiving an electronic mail message from a sender via a network element, the message specifying the subscriber as an intended recipient of the electronic mail message;

comparing information in the electronic mail message to the handling instructions stored in the network database for the subscriber;

where said electronic mail message is to be routed to the subscriber via a telephone, converting textual content in the electronic mail message to an audio message;

establishing a call to a telephone designated by the subscriber; and transmitting the audio message to the designated telephone.

29. (new) The method defined in claim 28, wherein the handling instructions are customizable by the subscriber and comprise the subscriber's email address, the subscriber's designated telephone for receiving audio messages, and the subscriber's electronic mail truncation instructions.

30. (new) The method defined in claim 29, wherein the electronic mail message is truncated according to the truncation instructions specified by the subscriber.

31. (new) The method defined in claim 28, further comprising the steps of: determining of whether the subscriber also subscribes to a caller identification service for providing caller identification information; and transmitting caller identification information to the telephone designated by the subscriber, the information including an indication that a telephone call received by the subscriber contains an electronic mail message.

32. (new) The method defined in claim 31, wherein the caller identification information further comprises the identity of the sender of the electronic mail message.

33. (new) The method defined in claim 31, wherein the caller identification information further comprises a subject matter identifier of the electronic mail message.

34. (new) The method defined in claim 31, wherein the caller identification information further comprises a portion of the text of the electronic mail message.

35. (new) The method defined in claim 28, further comprising the step of

sending a distinctive ringing pattern corresponding to the inclusion of an electronic mail message in the call.

36. (new) The method defined in claim 29, wherein the email message is not transmitted to a subscriber unless header information in the electronic mail message indicates that the message is urgent.

37. (new) The method defined in claim 28, further comprising the steps of:
prompting the subscriber to enter a feature activation code, the code comprising a signal to the telecommunication network to store the audio message in a voice mailbox; and
storing the audio message in a voice mail box upon receiving the code.

38. (new) The method defined in claim 28, further comprising the steps of:
prompting the subscriber to enter a feature activation code, the code comprising a signal to the telecommunication network to repeat the playing of the audio message; and
repeating the playing of the audio message upon receiving the feature activation code.

39. (new) The method defined in claim 28, wherein the telecommunication network includes an automated intelligent network for the automated processing of telephone calls in the network.

40. (new) The method defined in claim 39, wherein the network database comprises a service control point database in the intelligent network.

41. (new) A telecommunication system adapted to provide to a subscriber an audio message converted from an electronic mail message, the system comprising:

 a plurality of communication devices adapted to send and receive telephone calls;

 a plurality of electronic mail devices adapted to send and receive electronic mail messages;

 a service control point having call handling control logic and a database for storing call handling information and electronic mail handling instructions, the service control point being adapted to compare header information in an electronic mail message received by the service control point to electronic mail handling instructions stored in the database and to route the electronic mail message to the telephone number specified by the intended subscriber when the handling instructions so indicate; and

 a text-to-audio converter adapted to convert text in an electronic mail message to an audio message.

42. (new) The telecommunication system defined in claim 41, wherein the electronic mail handling instructions are customizable by the subscriber and comprise the subscriber's email address, the subscriber's designated telephone for receiving audio messages, and the subscriber's electronic mail truncation

instructions.

43. (new) The telecommunication system defined in claim 42, wherein the electronic mail message is truncated according to the truncation instructions specified by the subscriber.

44. (new) The telecommunication system defined in claim 41, wherein the service control point is further adapted to determine whether the subscriber subscribes to a caller identification service for providing caller identification information and to transmit caller identification information to the telephone designated by the subscriber, the information including an indication that a telephone call received by the subscriber contains an electronic mail message.

45. (new) The telecommunication system defined in claim 43, wherein the caller identification information further comprises the identity of the sender of the electronic mail message.

46. (new) The telecommunication system defined in claim 43, wherein the caller identification information further comprises a subject matter identifier of the electronic mail message.

47. (new) The telecommunication system defined in claim 43, wherein the caller identification information further comprises a portion of the text of the electronic mail message.

48. (new) The telecommunication system defined in claim 41, wherein the service control point is further adapted to send a distinctive ringing pattern corresponding to the inclusion of an electronic mail message in the call.

49. (new) The telecommunication system defined in claim 42, wherein the email message is not transmitted to a subscriber unless header information in the electronic mail message indicates that the message is urgent.

50. (new) The telecommunication system defined in claim 41, further comprising: an intelligent peripheral adapted to prompt the subscriber to enter a feature activation code, the code comprising a signal to the telecommunication system to store the audio message in a voice mailbox; and
a voice mailbox adapted to store the audio message upon receiving the code.

51. (new) The telecommunication system defined in claim 41, further comprising: an intelligent peripheral adapted to prompt the subscriber to enter a feature activation code, the code comprising a signal to the telecommunication system to repeat the playing of the audio message; and
a voice mailbox adapted to repeat the playing of the audio message upon receiving the feature activation code.